

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Family Iberian Adventure (Lite version) (FLA 2018 LITE)



TRIP DURATION
8
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Moderate

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Trip Code: FLA

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 3 nights Simple Guesthouse
4 nights Standard Hotel

Included Meals: 7 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners

Start Point: Join trip: Seville Airport

End Point: Trip ends: Alcoutim

Transport: Boat, Minibus, Bicycle, Ferry, On Foot

Countries: Spain, Portugal

Minimum Age: From 7 years



Family Iberian Adventure (Lite Version)

Based in an undiscovered corner of Western Europe, bathed under sunny skies, this great value multi activity week includes mountain biking, kayaking and walking in a traditional and untouched area of Andalucía and Southern Portugal. Discover a landscape of forested hills, mountain villages and shimmering lakes. Spend three nights in a lovingly converted village house, cycle amongst pristine forests and lakes and kayak and cruise along the scenic Guadiana River to the small resort town of Alcoutim.

This Explore Family holiday 'lite' option has been designed to offer you maximum flexibility; a great value price with many activities included but also the option to pick and choose additional activities you want to try. If half the family want to head out of a four wheel drive excursion into the interior whilst the other half want to take it easy, relaxing overlooking the Guadiana River - no problem, everyone can be accommodated! A full breakdown of the costs of each of the activities suggested on this trip are detailed in the downloadable trip notes - optional excursions section. Please note all activities are paid locally and are in addition to the basic holiday price on this Explore 'lite' family holiday.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Standard

Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Tour Pace: Moderate

These moderately paced tours provide some busy days with plenty of experiences to enjoy, as well as time to relax along the way.

Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

An Explore Leader is an integral part of any Explore trip and your trip will be led by one of our experienced Explore Leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Explore Leaders are the key to the success of our trips; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your Explore Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this trip fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Join tour Seville Airport, drive to our base at the Castaño del Robledo.

Arrive at Seville airport, drive 110km (1.5 hours) deep into rural Andalucía to a beautifully converted guesthouse in the heart of the Sierra Arcena Natural Park.



Set amidst rural landscapes of cork and chestnut groves, Castaño del Robledo is the highest village in the park. Depending on the arrival time of the flight from London, there may be time for a short wander around the village and the chance to sample some of the great local food.

Overnight: **Simple Guesthouse**

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Explore untouched Andalucía at its best, walking along ancient cobbled pathways to Alájar.

After breakfast head out along a trail to the picturesque 'pueblo blanco' (white village) of Alájar. The trail initially climbs through chestnut groves on an ancient cobbled pathway overhung by huge cork trees. After crossing a low pass, the walking becomes easier as we begin our long descent to Alájar. The views looking southwards over the hills are magnificent, it's possible to pick out the famous, historic mines of Rio Tinto in the far distance. Set in a deep valley, Alájar village is famed for the imposing 17th century shrine of Arias Montano which occupies a rocky outcrop high above the village. The shrine is the focal point of an annual pilgrimage each September, which attracts thousands of people, many on horseback or in colourfully decorated horse drawn carts, who head to Alájar from all the surrounding villages to spend the day eating, drinking, singing and dancing. It's possible to have lunch in one of several bars in the village or alternatively picnic in the surrounding countryside. In July and August we'll return to Castaño by taxi from where we can spend the afternoon by the pool or relax on the terrace of the Posada. Alternatively, there is the option of a horse-ride from the nearby village of Galaroza. Outside of the summer months we plan to return to Castaño on foot via the tiny hamlet of El Calabacino - a stiff but rewarding climb on yet another breath-taking route. Even if returning on foot there is time to go horse riding this afternoon, experience is needed to take part in this activity. Today's hike covers a distance of 10 kilometres in approximately 5 hours, except in July and August when we return to Castaño by taxi and cover 5 kilometres in approximately 2 hours.

Overnight: **Simple Guesthouse**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Mountain biking to one of Sierra's great lakes. Afternoon visit to the charming town of Aracena.

After breakfast drive 15 km to Aracena where we pick up our mountain bikes and, after a safety briefing, set off on a 12½ km ride through pretty countryside down to the shores of one of the Sierra's great lakes. The first eight kilometres descends using an unpaved road through the long, scenic Valley of the "Fuente del Rey". Pass small orchards of Almond, Cherry, Olive and Pomegranate. Further along the trail the landscape becomes wilder with steep wooded hillsides of Pine, Holm Oak and Poplar. Finally we emerge onto the quiet patchy asphalt road that continues another four kilometres along the lakeshore to a picnic area at the head of the lake. We are accompanied throughout by a support vehicle so there is plenty of room to bring lunch, bathing costumes and cold drinks. There's even the opportunity for a limited number of participants to ride in the support vehicle if some feel they no longer wish to cycle. After lunch there is time to take a swim in the lake and then take taxis for the 10km drive to Aracena, returning by a different route. The largest town in the region, Aracena is overlooked by an impressive 13th century Knights Templar church and ruined castle with fine views across the surrounding countryside. The town is most famous for the stunning 'Cave of the Wonders', an extensive collection of huge underground caverns, subterranean lakes and many chambers that are exquisitely adorned with all manner of stalagmites and stalactites. It's one of the largest cave systems in Spain with 12 caverns, 6 underground lakes and galleries with a combined length of over 2 km. Our time here is free to do as you wish and there will be an opportunity to visit the caves (optional), or perhaps enjoying some of the other delights the town has on offer, such as a visit to the castle, or time just to relax and soak up the atmosphere from the street cafes that line the "Gran Via" and the town's pleasant plaza. We return to Castaño del Robledo by charter bus where we can have dinner in one of the village's two restaurants.

Overnight: **Simple Guesthouse**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 4 Drive to Mértola in Portugal. Afternoon kayaking on the Guadiana River.

Bidding farewell to Spain, a scenic descent from the sierra brings us to Portugal and the stunning town of Mértola above the confluence of the Oeiras and Guadiana Rivers. Our journey takes us via Serpa, a classic walled town of narrow streets and picturesque houses, blanketed in colourful swathes of bougainvillea. Dominated by the remains of its castle, Serpa provides us with a welcome respite along the way and we will spend a little time exploring the delights of its tranquil streets and castle ramparts before continuing our journey. Look out for White Storks along the route. From January to July virtually all of the posts that carry the electricity cables lining our route have been turned into convenient nesting spots by these ungainly looking birds. After time to have lunch and settle into the hotel in Mertola we take to the waters of the Guadiana River in kayaks. First we drive 18km by road (½ hour) to the ruined stone watermills of Canais at a point on the river some seven kilometres upstream from Mertola in the heart of the Vale do Guadiana Natural Park. The river here is 60 to 80m wide and the journey downstream takes approximately 2 ½ hours through an undulating landscape unspoiled by roads or habitation. Using double seater, fibreglass kayaks this excursion is suitable for all levels and full safety equipment and instruction will be given, however it is essential that any participants are able to swim at least 25m unaided.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 Spend time exploring Mértola, morning guided riverside walk. Optional 4WD

After breakfast there will be a short orientation walk of the town, highlighting the centres of its Roman, Christian and Islamic occupations, as well as the 13th century castle that dominates the town. Follow its history via a series of exhibitions that each traces the various aspects of the rich cultural and historical heritage of the region. Crossing the old bridge to the south of the town we take an eight kilometre riverside walk downstream from Mertola returning over some low hills to town. Looking back upstream we get some of the best views of Mertola's old walled town spread out around its impregnable castle. The rest of the day has been left free to explore Mértola, with the possibility of a half day optional 4x4 excursion into the outlying districts, taking in some of the surrounding villages, the bizarre, multi-coloured rock landscapes surrounding the old copper mines of Sao Domingos, the spectacular waterfalls of Pulo de Lobo and a lovely lakeside beach where you can relax and enjoy the serene setting of a shaded reservoir.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 6 Boat trip to Alcoutim, with an orientation walk on arrival, optional kayaking

At the town quay just 200m from our hotel we take our own specially chartered riverboat for the exciting trip down the Guadiana River to Alcoutim. Our departure time depends on tidal conditions and we break the 3 hour trip with a stop at the tiny 19th century port of Pomerão and also some time at anchor, mid river, to enjoy a refreshing dip in the Guadiana which, for the remainder of its course, forms the border between Spain and Portugal. At 760km the Guadiana is one of the Iberian peninsula's longest rivers. Throughout history periodic floods have devastated communities along its length attested to by various plaques in towns such as Mertola which record the remarkable high water points of days gone by. Yet for over 10 years the river's flow has been largely controlled by the completion of the huge Alqueva dam 120km to the north. In Alcoutim we disembark at the hotel wharf and check into our rooms at the Hotel D'Alcoutim, where our luggage awaits us. After lunch we take a short orientation walk around the town. With around 900 inhabitants Alcoutim is a quaint backwater which offers a number of interesting sights and activities all within easy walking distance. Dominated by its 14th century fortress the town is laid out around the confluence of the Ribeira de Cadavais with the main Guadiana river. The former's small but excellent white sand beach is the town's main tourist attraction offering a cooling swim together with refreshments from a rustic bar/café. Although the beach is only 650m walk from the hotel a popular excursion is to hire kayaks at the hotel and paddle there via the Guadiana and its tributary, perhaps sighting a terrapin or two along the way. From a quayside café on the main river you can watch the skiffs and sailing yachts against the backdrop of Alcoutim's twin village of Sanlúcar a mere 100m away on the Spanish side of the river.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 7 Free day for optional activities including biking, kayaking, zip wire, tennis or sightseeing.

We cross by shuttle boat to Sanlúcar in Spain to commence a delightful 5½ km walking trail that hugs the river south of the town. There are bathing opportunities in a tributary river where the trail ends and from there we take taxis for the two kilometres by road back to town. In Sanlúcar you'll have time to explore the village, climb to the Spanish castle of San Marcos, relax on the Spanish fluvial beach or participate in one of the most exciting optional activities in Portugal. The 720m long international aerial runway operates from a jump platform high on a hill above Sanlúcar. Travelling at speeds of up to 75 km/hr you'll whizz across the river between the two countries in just over a minute and dismount from a platform just 300m from our hotel. It is the only international aerial runway in the world and also the only one that travels back in time! (The Portuguese time zone is one hour earlier). NB. This activity is available only for persons of 14 years or older. After lunch we return to Portugal where the remainder of the day is free to hire mountain bikes, kayaks, relax on the beach or, for the more energetic, play volley ball or tennis or climb to the ruins of the 10th century Moorish fortress less than 1km north of the hotel.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 8 Trip ends in Alcoutim.

The trip ends this morning after breakfast. For those flying back to the UK, driver 95km (1.5 hours) to Faro Airport

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Ability to swim required

An ability to swim is essential for your safe enjoyment of the water based activities on this trip. If you wish to participate in these activities then we insist that you are able to swim.

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Notes

Located on a narrow cobbled street in the mountain village of Castano del Robledo, Posada del Castano was originally a large traditional Andalucian village house. Lovingly converted into a simple guesthouse the building retains many of its original features including rustic terracotta floor tiles and chestnut roof beams. The house remains cool in summer and cosy in winter thanks to the thick outer walls, whilst the terrace and courtyard serve as perfect outdoor space to enjoy the sunshine. Facilities include an upstairs small lounge complete with comfortable seating, books and games, and a balcony offering views of the red-tiled roof tops of the village set against the lush green hills beyond. A continental breakfast is served in the largest room of the house, with large antique wooden doors opening out onto a covered terrace overlooking the courtyard below and garden beyond. The courtyard features a shaded cushioned bench and a table, whilst the garden has a lawn bordered with flowers amongst the cherry, plum and persimmon trees. The guesthouse offers eight rooms, of which seven have en-suite bathrooms. Rooms are accessed either through the courtyard, the terrace or the upstairs lounge and all have their own unique character. All feature wooden furniture, terracotta tiled floors and roof beams in line with the rest of the house.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 7 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Spain

Lunch £: 6.00 - 10.00

Dinner £: 12.00 - 16.00

Portugal

Lunch £: 10.00 - 12.00

Dinner £: 15.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Spain

Bottle of Beer £: 1.50 - 2.50 (depending on the region/area in Spain)

Water £: 1.40

Portugal

Bottle of Beer £: 2.00 - 3.00 depending on your location, well touristed areas are usually slightly more expensive.

Water £: 1.40

Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Optional Excursions

Please note that whilst many activities are included on this trip, some additional activities are booked and paid for locally and are in addition to the basic holiday price on this Explore 'lite' family holiday. Prices quoted below are based on 2017 rates, 2018 prices will be updated as soon as they become available.

Day 2: CastaNo del Robledo - Public pool €2 pp (Only open July and August, closed on Mondays)

Day 2: Castaño del Robledo - Horseriding €20 pp for 1 hour, €30 pp for 2 hours. The stables are located in Galaroza, 10km away. Prices exclude transport to/from the stables, the price of which will depend on numbers.

Day 3: Aracena - Visit to the Caves on day 3 €8.50 (€6 for under 12's) 50 minute tour, walking around 1.2 kms with 100 steps to climb.
Day 5: Mertola - Museum multi entrance ticket €5
Day 5: Mertola - 4x4 excursion on day 5 €35 pp a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 8 participants. The jeep safari lasts around 4 hours.
Day 5: Mertola - Abseiling on day 5 fixed price of €250 for a minimum of 8 participants.
Days 6 & 7: Alcoutim - Mountain Bike Hire €10 per bike per day (helmet hire available at €5)
Days 6 & 7: Alcoutim - Kayak hire €6 for 1 hour, €10 for half a day
Days 6 & 7: Alcoutim - Museum multi entrance ticket €2.50
Days 6 & 7: Alcoutim - International Zipwire €18 pp, minimum age of 14 and maximum weight of 110kg applies. Starts on the Spanish side. Along the 720 metres joining the two countries users cross over the river at speeds between 70 and 80 kilometres per hour, literally flying through time and gaining one hour because of the time zone change between both countries.

Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour. Accordingly, you should allow approximately €30 for tipping.

Foreign Exchange

Spain

ATM Availability: In cities and most major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance: Visa and Mastercard are generally accepted in larger restaurants and some shops.

Travellers Cheques: Not recommended.

Local Currency: Euros

Recommended Currency for Exchange: We recommend you take the majority of your spending money in Euros cash.

Where to Exchange: We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

Portugal

ATM Availability: Cash-point machines are available in all major towns. Bankcards with the Cirrus logo are accepted.

Credit Card Acceptance: Visa and Mastercard are generally accepted in larger restaurants and some shops.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers cheques can be exchanged in all major towns but are not recommended due to the high rate of commission.

Local Currency: Euro.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Take the majority of your spending money in Euros cash.

Where to Exchange: We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

Joining your Trip

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore


We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

Spain and Portugal: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on **0208 5431846**.

Lone Parents

Spain

Single parents or other adults travelling alone with children should be aware that some countries require documentation confirming that the individual has authority to travel with the minor. It is crucial that you contact the Spanish embassy for further information on exactly what may be required.

Portugal

Vaccinations & Protection

Spain

Nothing compulsory but Tetanus is usually recommended as a precaution. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

Portugal

Nothing compulsory but Tetanus is usually recommended as a precaution. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

Preparing for your Trip

Climate

Spain

Overall, spring, early summer and autumn are ideal times for a Spanish trip - though the weather varies enormously from region to region. The high central plains suffer from fierce extremes, stiflingly hot in summer, bitterly cold and swept by freezing winds in winter. The Atlantic coast, in contrast, has a tendency to damp and mist, and a relatively brief, humid summer. The Mediterranean south is warm virtually all year round. Spain's Islands the Canaries and Balaerics experience very mild winters and warm summers making them ideal year round destinations.

Portugal

Overall, spring, early summer and autumn are ideal times for a trip to Portugal - though the weather varies enormously from region to region. The northern high plains has both extremes, stiflingly hot in summer, bitterly cold and swept by freezing winds in winter. The Atlantic coast, in contrast, has a tendency to damp and mist, and a relatively brief, humid summer. The Mediterranean south is warm virtually all year round. The islands have very different weather patterns due to their positioning and can have sudden rain falls throughout the year so waterproofs are recommended even in the summer.

Clothing

Outside of the summer months of June to September Andalucía is generally mild, though the Sierras are subject to some rain, so waterproofs are also recommended for the rare shower. Lightweight cotton clothing is advised from June to September, although for late and early season you may also like to pack a fleece or warm sweater. Don't forget your swimming costumes.

Equipment

Insect repellent, high factor suncream (at least factor 15), good quality sunglasses, a torch and a water bottle. You will also need a towel for the canoeing and for swimming and you may want to bring gloves, knee/elbow pads and padded shorts for the cycling. You will need a helmet for your cycle excursion on day 3. You may hire a helmet locally for €5 or you may wish to take your own.

Footwear

Lightweight walking boots/shoes for general travel and sandals/trainers for relaxing. You will also need to bring sandals that you don't mind getting wet - for the canoe excursion.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece and a daypack. Remember, you are expected to carry your own luggage - so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Spain

Population: 46,030,109

Size of Country: 504,782 sq km

Major Language: Castilian Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Basque

Religion: Roman Catholic

Time Difference to GMT: +1

Portugal

Population: 10,647,763

Size of Country: 92,090 sq km

Major Language: Portuguese

Religion: Roman Catholic

Electric Supply & Plugs

Spain

2 Pin Round

Portugal

2 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award-winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family-run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2018 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2018. 2019/20 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2019.

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